

Introducer 1: Nanaimo Historical Society. Thursday, May the 10th, 2001 at the society's regular meeting. Introducing Margaret Horsfield who will speak and show slides on Cougar Annie's garden on the west coast of Vancouver Island.

I 2: Given the honour of introducing the speaker. [Unintelligible] and a member of [unintelligible]. Cougar Annie's Garden Project. Yes, that's right. It is a legitimate organization. I had the pleasure of working along with Leo. And there's another member here, the lady in red over here, is a member of the famed society. It's an organization that after you visited the garden, and during Anne Horsfield's talk in the capitals there in Alberni, are very impressed. I said at the beginning "well how do we get to Hesquiaht Harbour" Which is north of Tofino, away in the bush, isolated. I thought maybe if we hired a plane in the summer, we'd get there. Well of course it didn't work out, as we got there by boat from Tofino and spent the day there. It's a 3 hour boat trip and 11 miles trip along the logging road and you come in the back way. You don't go out to the entrance to the harbour because there's rocks there. It's a 9 miles trip from the garden to the, in the point. Anyway, we went there and had a wonderful time all because we listened to a very excellent speaker and she's created quite an impression. Thanks to her work, there was something to the effect at that time that you saw a, you had a nose for a story when you first heard about this garden in the bush. And so it developed very nicely from there, a courtesy. Now, Anne has written 4 books. 2 in conjunction with her father, the Reverend Horsfield. My connection with him and that's how these funny things work out. Reverend Horsfield and I met in the harbour. Out here in the harbour. He rowed a boat. I rowed a boat. The next day, we'd get out rowing and we'd talk [unintelligible] family and she's born. Margaret was born and went to live in Alberni so she knows the territory about which she writes. And that's a very important fact to journalism. She wrote these books and she can tell you about them. She had a wonderful experience living in London as a radio journalist with the BBC. She was there quite a few years. I guess that's where she knew about her town. And you'll find yourself being very impressed. You'll be left wondering about a character we all know as Cougar Annie. And so would you come up and explain it all to us?

Margaret Horsfield: Now, I see so many faces I recognize and I want to thank you all very much for more faces, gosh, for coming. I'm very glad also to see Mrs. Bentley who is an old friend of my mother's. And my mother herself could come, Anne Horsfield. The only trouble with having particularly my mother in the audience is that I can't tell quite as many lies as I'm accustomed to telling. So unfortunately this is going to be a very dull show with no exaggerations at all. Now, I haven't got a remote control for the, when I'm actually talking to the slides, I will sit down I think, because I don't have a remote control to press. But first of all, I would like to set the scene a bit. I know also, by the way that several of you here have already seen this slide show once. Which again is rather intimidating, cause it means that I hope you're not fact-checking me because I tend to change the story a bit. And this is very much in keeping with the story of Cougar Annie, because the stories of Cougar Annie mutated over the years and there is more rumour in fact than perhaps hard information about this woman. When I first began to do this book, I thought it was a fool's errand because there wasn't enough information. Peter Buckland who took over the property that Cougar Annie owned, decided he wanted me to try to write a book and we sort of argued about it and I thought it was impossible because this is an undocumented life and I'm sure many of you as historians and archivists will know how difficult it is to bring information together when a lot of it has been burned or thrown away or disregarded or let rot in an attic to the point that you can't read it anymore and that was a bit of what it was like with Cougar Annie. So I was picking through tiny bits of information, trying to draw them together. And at best I think what I've done with

the story of Cougar Annie is I've done kind of impressionistic sketch of her life. This is by no means a biography. What I have tried to do though and I think perhaps is a bit more reliable in the book, is to give a context for this woman's life. Because I think that her whole story seems like a complete bizarre anomaly when you see it from our perspective. But in 1915 when she went out as a pioneer to the west coast of Vancouver Island, she was part of a movement of many people all through British Columbia trying to settle in what were considered inhospitable wastes of land. Some chose better parts of the country than others. She chose the bit that was gradually deserted over the subsequent decades really by many, many other would-be settlers and she was left out there effectively alone. Now when I say "out there", what I'm going to have to do is sit so you can all see by me to see the slides and start talking to the slides. The most important thing to know here, as I say is which direction to go with the machine first of all. But there we have the map. The map. Tofino is here. 35 miles north, along the coast of Vancouver Island is Hesquiaht Harbour which Gordon Halkett very kindly mentioned in his flattering introduction. And at the tip of Hesquiaht Harbour is Cougar Annie's garden. Now that is a very deep harbour. It's about 7 miles at least from there to there. The steam ship that supplied the coast during the early years of the 20th century, The Maquinna, would moor here. So any connections with Cougar Annie and her garden at the head of the harbour meant paddling out 6 or 7 miles to The Maquinna and getting all supplies, sending out all mail in very hazardous open waters and in all weathers. A better picture, sorry. This is the artist's map we had done which shows in slightly more detail the setting here. Again, the dark patch at the tip is the patch of land that they preempted that we now call "Cougar Annie's Garden." This was preempted by Cougar Annie herself. Her real name then was Ada Annie Rae-Arthur. She and her husband Willie and their 3 small children arrived there in 1915. It was 117 acres, that preemption which was a fairly standard size for a preemption of land. Quite a large one. They cleared five acres of it. So five acres is the garden and the rest is still bush. The patches of light brown around the harbour are Indian reserves that were set out as early as 1886 by Indian agent O'Riley of the beautiful copperplate handwriting I saw so much of. Those reserves of course are still Indian reserves. It's all land that's under claim at the moment. And, but this one here, I.R 1, was the one where Hesquiaht Village is and was. At the turn of the 20th century, this village was a very busy bustling place. Now one family lives there. Probably back when Cougar Annie and her husband went out there, there may have been in the winter, cause it was a winter village site, there may have been up to 200 people there in a winter. Which made it a premier site on the coast, which is one of the reasons that the Roman Catholics decided to set out a mission there. 1875 thank you very much. There was a huge Roman Catholic mission established there, or at least it became a huge mission very, very early in terms of contact history. Another reason this is an important setting of course is Estevan light, built in 1908. That was a very important light station on the coast. It's still one of the manned ones of course, which speaks volumes. It was built as were so many of the lighthouses in response to the disastrous series of shipwrecks on the coast in the late 19th century. What else to tell you here? Hotsprings Cove at the head of this long fjord here is where, it's becoming quite a tourist destination now. And this is where most of the Hesquiaht people gradually moved to when they abandoned their traditional village site. A process that happened over some time. And the reasons for it were many and varied but amongst the reasons almost certainly is that the motor boat came onto the scene. This is a brilliant site for the dugout canoe to be drawn up on land. The dugout canoe is tailor made for those open waters. As soon as you have a motor boat though that needs to be moored, they were repeatedly and consistently smashed to smithereens. Whenever the missionaries or Indian people got hold of a motor boat, it didn't last long at all. Gradually the Indian people moved down and now their travel headquarters is at Hotsprings Cove.

There is talk of moving back to Hesquiaht, to the harbour, but no real movement has occurred yet. This typical west coast stay. Peter Buckland went up the mountain I think seven times before he got this shot. It is never this clear, but it's a really good picture because it's taken from the mountain behind the garden, looking out over this long Hesquiaht Harbour towards the traditional village site of the Hesquiaht people there. The head of Hesquiaht Harbour, this part here, is known as Boat Basin, which is where the Boat Basin Foundation comes from which I'll be talking about later and where indeed the Boat Basin Post Office got its name from. All of which is connected of course to Cougar Annie. Right here you can pick out the clearing. Just see the 5 acre clearing there. And you can see also the property abuts in the lower corner here, onto a lake at the back of the property. Now that lake is known as Ray Lake, after of course Willie Rae-Arthur, husband number one. There were four husbands over the course of Cougar Annie's life and it's a bit confusing at times to know what surname she was going by and I'll get to that later. The story of the husbands is amongst the best part of this. And there is the beach at Boat Basin very much as it would've looked like in 1915 probably when she arrived with husband, 3 children and all their worldly goods. They came up on The Maquinna, moored off Hesquiaht Village. Everything was offloaded into a couple of dugout canoes, including a cow with its legs tethered, on his back upside down. And they were paddled into this godforsaken bit of rainforest. They knew very little about what they were coming to. The move had been arranged for them in rather unfortunate circumstances and they faced an impenetrable forest. When you go in, many of you who know this coast will I'm sure be able to relate to this. You face this wall of jungle and you think "how am I going to get through that and build a garden?" It just seems completely impossible, but that's what she did. The first problem was getting to the property. Typical of pioneer land preemptions, it did not front onto the water. There was about a 200 yard corridor of thick virgin rainforest that stands to this day between the garden property and the seashore. So having rowed everything into the shore, you then had to go through 200 yards of rainforest uphill over a ravine to get to your property. They built this walkway and this photograph was taken in the 1970s. And it shows you rather better on this side what you're dealing with, because they had to go over this slight ravine and this is a split cedar walkway that still stands. It's not useable anymore. It's very dangerous, but that gives you some slight idea of the problems. Bear in mind you're pushing wheelbarrows full of supplies uphill to get to the garden in the first place, again having rowed across the harbour to get there. This is the entrance to the garden and again in the 1970s. Needless to say there is not much information about the garden in its early days. A few interviews with the daughters have helped me. A few bits of correspondence that have survived have helped me. But I'm putting it together a lot of it by really reading the garden itself and trying to figure out what she planted, when she might have planted it. This does show in the 70s, that the orchard, these are all fruit trees here, the orchard was still doing very well in the 70s. It's now almost, well I wouldn't say extinct, but it's very fragile because the fence has gone down around the property. This 5 acres was completely fenced against marauders like bears and cougars. The bears love, just love coming in and eating the fruit and every autumn you will find yet another tree cracked where a bear has tried to climb some fragile branches and the thing is getting more, the trees are getting more and more fragile by the year. She had a very great variety of fruit trees. In the late 70's, somebody told me they recalled picking 22 varieties of apple alone. Now go figure. She also had plums, crabapples, pears and she planted all these trees herself. How she got them there, whether they were seedlings or whether she grew them from seed, we don't know. Maybe she bought saplings, maybe she traded saplings. In any case, she had a notable orchard which is no small achievement on that coast. Here again a photograph from the 1970s. You can see this pathway going in and the kind of profusion of growth. She had a lot of roses. Very few of them

have survived. But this is actually a very atmospheric shot because everybody who recalls this garden from that period remembers how messy it was. Peter Buckland who knew her well in the 60s and 70s said it just looked like hillbilly country. It was straight out of the Ozarks really. And there was slabs of corrugated tin and then broken walkways and chicken wire and crooked fence posts all over the place. The aesthetics of the upkeep were not concentrated on too much. What she concentrated on obviously were the plantings and the liberal nature of the garden itself. And the house. This is the house again in the 1970s. We're very proud of what to us are old photographs. I mean it was very hard to get earlier photographs. Taken in about 1970, this was the house, the general store, the post office. This is the house that was built in 1923, just in time for the birth of her last son Tommy, her last surviving son, Tommy. I should add that she has a number of children, she had a number of children, Cougar Annie, during those early years at Boat Basin, bearing in mind she arrived with 3. During those early years, during that early decade, she bore 8 more children. 3 of those babies died in infancy. And this means that she was pregnant most of the time she was clearing the land and establishing the garden. There she is, the old lady herself. About 90 years old then in the late 1970s. She was very fussy about being photographed. She wanted to only be photographed from her good side and many visitors will recall how she fussed about the angle and the direction that the photograph would be taken. She was a very striking woman. Bright blue eyes. Tiny. Would only have stood up about here on me. Her daughters resemble her strongly I'm told. Of course I never met Cougar Annie. She died in 1985. I first went up there in 1989. But her 2 daughters I've met, I've talked to 2 others on the phone, but the two I met have this kind of bird-like, wiry quality, with bright blue eyes that I'm told were very similar to Cougar Annie. They also had the ability to make you feel like a complete fool for asking obvious questions. I was a little afraid of those daughters. One of them, Rose, died last year. Margaret, her eldest daughter is still alive, in her late 80s and lives in Campbell River. By the way, can everybody here me alright? OK. This is where the research got interesting. Because as I say, this was an undocumented life, but in the house that you saw earlier, which by the way, when I first saw it and now is a moldering mess. Very dangerous to enter, kneeling on one side, doorjamb all stuck, floorboards heaved up. Actually quite a menacing place to get into. I crawled through the remains of that house many times on my hands and knees hauling out boxes of smelly stuff. Papers and whatever it was, books, odd bits and pieces. And this was one of the odd bits. I thought it was a picture postcard. Like everything else in that house was either soaking wet or completely coated in white mildew. This one was completely coated in white mildew. And I took a Kleenex and rubbed it very hard, you know just to make sure I ruined it really, and found a family photograph. And that is the young Ada Annie Jordan as she was born and her parents, George and Margaret. I know this because on the back, it's the name of the photographer and the date that's absolutely right, and the place, Sacramento, California. She was born in Sacramento, California. At this time this was taken, she would have been about 7 or 8 years old. George Jordan had emigrated from England and this was their one and only child, Ada Annie. There had been another child who died from the Cholera when they had been in transit in New York. But Ada Annie was raised alone. She was also raised largely as a boy. The girls, her daughters say that she was, only as a treat was she allowed to wear girls' clothes. She was always made to wear britches. And she was taught to hunt, to shoot, to trap at a very young age. And was quite severely punished for small infractions. George Jordan was a very strange, demanding man. He was a fruit farmer in Sacramento at this point of his career. But he was a man who kept reinventing himself. He had many, many careers and when the fruit farm was demolished because I think either fire or earthquake, I'm not quite sure which, he took his family around the globe to South Africa where he was in some fashion connected to the Boer War. He claimed he was a doctor,

but in fact there was no, I can find no proof of this at all. Like the whole family has a tendency to lay claim to titles and perhaps glamour that isn't at least verifiable in the archives I've looked at. There's Annie though, in South Africa. This photograph was supplied by Margaret Wilkinson, her daughter. She had then at that point won some kind of horticultural competition and this photograph I believe appeared in the newspaper. She was probably in her early teens then. After South Africa, they came to Canada. Tried Lethbridge, farming again, failed again. And wound up in Winnipeg where George Jordan decided to train as a veterinarian. At this point Ada Annie had reached her late teens, and there she is as, for a very brief period, as a young career woman. She had studied and again, this is all credit to her family I guess for encouraging this. She had studied what was the new technologies of typewriting and shorthand. And in fact amid those mildewed mess of papers that I found in the house at Boat Basin, I found "The Pitman's Shorthand Primer" that she used. A tiny little book, just falling apart, stinking of mildew, but all of the exercises ticked off and dated in 1901, 1902 when she was studying shorthand. And having these qualifications enabled her to work as the clark's steno, she was for several years for the T. Eaton Company in Winnipeg. And later when they came out to Vancouver, she worked as a clark's steno for a law firm in Vancouver. I haven't been able to learn very much about that. But one of her elderly boyfriends in one of his letters talks of her early days working for a law firm in Vancouver. As you see, she was very beautiful girl, with a very small waist. In Vancouver, George Jordan opened his veterinarian hospital on Seymour Street. I think it was 886 or something, Seymour Street, and Ada Annie helped him with the animals. And who should walk in one day but her nemesis, Willie Rae-Arthur. William Francis John Rae-Arthur, to be precise. I don't know when he arrived in Canada. I suspect he was fairly fresh off the boat at that point. He brought in his little dog to have it cared for at the hospital. And there he met the young Ada Annie. Willie was then 36, she was 21 and they married in 1909. Now Willie came from a very good family in Scotland. His father was Lord Provost of Glasgow or had been in an earlier era. And that is an elected position, rather like Lord Mayor. And they had been prominent citizens to the point that his mother and father were invited to Buckingham Palace to conversensiolias with the Princess Louisa and things like that. I've seen those invitations. They are very, very entertaining. Willie was the youngest son and he was definitely the black sheep of the family. And as we all know the history of Canada has been made up by the black sheeps from British families. He was sent away because of his likeness, apparently because he was fond of hard drink and told to keep away and he was paid to stay away. A remittance man in other words. And he stayed out of trouble more or less for a little while in the early years of their marriage. The first 3 children were born in Vancouver. But then family rumour has it that what happened is that Willie discovered the opium dens of Chinatown and things went from not very good to a lot worse. He spent a lot of money. He never did think very highly of having to work for a living. He had briefly held a position as the, as a clark for the C.P. Company. C.P.R. That ended when he threw an inkwell through a plate-glass window apparently. But he didn't really believe that a gentleman should have to work. In any case, he didn't work. He fell into the opium dens more and more, became very ill and the disapproving families actually got together. His father was by then dead, but his sister had married extremely well and had become very wealthy and had in fact bought her own castle in Scotland and she and George Jordan between them I believe organized that the young couple and the children should be sent away from temptation. Now let me tell you, Boat Basin is a long way away from temptation and is a very, very hard way to go cold turkey I would imagine. But this is where they wound up. This photograph was one of the greatest finds in the writing of the book. It was in the archives in British, down in Victoria. It is labeled "Rae-Arthur on his doorstep" and as you see Rae-Arthur is not working. He's leaning nonchalantly on one shoulder. Probably somewhere out

in the garden is young Ada Annie doing all the work. Here we have the eldest daughter, Margaret, still alive, age probably about 4. They weren't as isolated in those early years as you might imagine. They certainly weren't as isolated as the place is now. Same year they preempted their tract of land at the head of Boat Basin, Arthur Wheeler also preempted land very nearby. Certainly within an easy few minutes' walk from the Ray Arthurs'. I don't know if they had much to do with each other, but certainly they were neighbours. He and his young wife lived there for a couple of years. She died and he gave up. He lost heart and he abandoned the whole idea of the preemption and left. There's now no trace of course. These cabins disappear so quickly in the bush. We've looked for the Wheeler cabin. We know where it should be. No trace of it. I like this photograph because you see how you have the use the building materials that are at hand. It was rather substantial post to hold up a flimsy roof, but that's what they had. Helen Wheeler, his wife, is probably buried somewhere in Cougar Annie's garden. According to the death certificate, she's buried in the Rae-Arthur property. The reason these early photographs have, even exist is because of the Catholic missionaries. You know again as a researcher, I'm deeply grateful that they wrote everything down. This is Charles Moser and he succeeded Father Augustine Brabant as the head person at the mission of Hesquiaht. Brabant had been there from 1875 to about 1908 and he was a ferocious and zealous missionary to put it mildly. Moser was a gentler man and mercifully a very gossipy man. And he wrote this rather golly rambling diary where he noted things like the birth of a Ray Arthur child or the death of so-and-so by smallpox so you could pick up a lot from Moser's diary. But he I don't think very happy there. He was constantly begging to be released from this mission. This gives you an idea when I say it was a big mission, this is the church that was built. It kept going through various incarnations because it seemed to burn down every few years. But it was a very big church. And it had a very soaring steep tower which rotted or fell off and then they replaced it with this funny little blob. This photograph would be from about the 1920s. And they managed to fill this church more or less by forced measure I think. Everybody in the village was made to attend service. Another of the mission photographs, this one showing what are termed in Moser's diaries "the good Christian dwellings for the savages." End quote. If you could see off to the left here, I think that this photograph is I think from 1917, probably there would still have been, if not a standing long house, the very visible remains of a long house. There's archeological evidence of 8 major long houses at Hesquiaht which again shows how important that village site was on the west coast. It's not a village that we now hear much or know much about, but at its time it was very important. It was very central. I should also point out that there are cows and horses here. Again one of the main aims of the missionaries was to, and I quote "instill the love of agriculture in the savages." Now these native people of course had lived for millennia on the coast and they basically knew better than to try to farm on the west coast of Vancouver Island. And they, as for keeping domestic animals, it was an unheard of thought. The domestic animals kind of sorted it out for themselves though, particularly the cows because they took one look at all the lovely lush greenery and leapt fence immediately and kept leaping the fences. Batch after batch after batch of cows went wild on the peninsula and they became the feral cattle of Hesquiaht peninsula and were famed up and down the coast. There were about 3 bands as far as I know, 3 groups of wild cattle on the west coast of Vancouver Island. One at Nootka, one I believe at Ucluelet and one at Hesquiaht. And sightings of the Hesquiaht cows have a kind of Ogotopogon, Sasquatch-like quality. The latest sighting I've heard of is definite, which is probably in the late 1980s. But there are still fishermen who draw me aside and say they're sure they saw one last week you know. In fact there haven't been any really reliable sightings for a long time, but there were a lot of them at one point. And they were terribly fierce, these cows. They grew of course very long horns and the stories get bigger and

bigger you know, more and more steam pours out of their nostrils, each person you speak to. But they were hunted for meat. And in fact Cougar Annie herself probably hunted them when she was desperate. And it wasn't good meat because it was, well as one of the archeologists said to me who was working there in the 70s, he said "Oh I once had some Hesquiaht cow" he said "I've been picking the sinew out of my teeth for 30 years." There actually in the background, you can just pick out the tall soaring spire I was talking about. That was the church spire at Hesquiaht. This is the line man fixing the telegraph line at Hesquiaht. This telegraph line looped up and down the west coast and it was a lifesaving line. It looped together joining every hamlet, every small homestead. When the Ray Arthurs went there in 1915, they had telegraph in their house almost immediately. They were able to get news of the First World War just like that. It's bizarre to think how well.

[Recording breaks]

MH: Good on shipwrecks but I think it was particularly the Valencia disaster that convinced. Is that right Jan? Yeah, it was 120 people killed on that within, almost within touching reach of land. And had there been a telegraph line, one or two of the people who had got to land would have been able to call for help for those still clinging to the ship, who so tragically died. So that telegraph line was incredibly important. And it linked this coast to the very, very early stage in the 20th century. And now I'm going to take you into the garden now, as it now is. I sometimes talk, do this slideshow for gardening groups and I talk more, less about the history and more about the garden. Now I'll just whiz through some of the garden stuff for you. As you look at pictures of the garden, there's 2 things to remember that are very important. One is that it has been restored but nothing new has been planted. Peter Buckland took over the garden. He took over a sleeping beauty jungle of a garden. Parts of it were so overgrown, you could barely see what was in the middle of these thickets of salmonberry and blackberries and the young hemlock that were 12 feet high, growing out of garden beds. It was just overrun. The rainforest had moved back in. Cause you've got to remember, Cougar Annie stayed up there for nearly 70 years and of course it was a huge garden, even in its heyday when she was younger. But as she grew older, she was quite unable to keep up with its demands, so gradually the forest had been moving back in. And she was going blind, so I don't think she really knew. Peter has, the second thing to remember is while Peter's not planted anything new, he has put in a few new structures. This pergola as you go in is built by Peter. He loves to play with the design and I'll talk a bit more about that later on, but he always uses, he's a great artist with wood and you'll see this as we go through the garden. One of the first things you see now is now you go in what Peter calls "his memorial to Cougar Annie." It of course is a tree root and this tree root actually came from the lake at the back of the property. It was from a submerged douglas fir and had probably been sticking out for a long, long time. Many generations. Peter had a friend with a helicopter who owed him a favour. He went underwater, sawed the thing off or chainsawed it off, ruined the chainsaw in the process, and had it lifted down to the garden. He thinks he sees a woman in prayer. I think I see someone standing on their head. He also brought down at the same time, what he calls "the whale." And this is a root that looks very like a whale and he's rigged it so you can make the whale spout on command. And that season, that was the first season he planted wheat in front of the whale to make it look like it was swimming. It didn't quite work because he had 3 crop failures before that wheat grew cause the blue jays kept eating all the seed. Now this, just trying to focus this a bit more. This is an artist's map we had drawn of the garden. Very briefly as I say, it's 5 acres. It slopes very gently, north to south. It's surrounded by forest. There's this fringe of virgin forest that stands between the garden and the sea, so it's very protected from offshore winds. And because it's got all the forests

and the mountains in the background, it's sort of hugged by forests and mountains to the point that it's becomes quite a heat sink in the summer. It's very hot up there. Never gets much wind. The soil is uniformly good throughout that patch of property. It's probably about 12 to 18 inches deep, sandy loam. Almost no rocks in that patch. They choose a very blessed bit of land. They would have had to clear the land but this, as you go up from the beach, you leave behind very quickly the absolutely thick, impenetrable, huge cedar forest and you come into more of a scrubby pine area. This is probably, it would have a few big cedars, but mostly smaller trees, so the clearing of it isn't as brutal as clearing the really thick forest would have been. Although there were plenty of big stumps there still. What you can see here also is that there are a number of pathways intertwining all the shrubbery. This is really not how Cougar Annie would have had it. She would have a few sensible straight lines leading straight to her production beds. She wasn't a frivolous woman. But when Peter was clearing the land, he really did it by whim and a little bit at a time. And so he would be as he called it "wailing around" with his chainsaw cause he developed what he called "the art of chainsaw gardening." The only way to get through this mess was with a chainsaw. And the way he developed these pathways was simply by cutting away and then when he saw something that wasn't indigenous, he went around it. And so these goofy little pathways emerged, sort of weaving and bobbing amongst all the plants that Peter knew weren't indigenous. The real joke about both Peter Buckland's and my involvement with the garden is that my mother I'm sure would attest, neither of us knows the first thing about gardening. We know a little bit now cause we had to learn it. But when you see say Peter or me giving a garden tour, it's rather a joke and you mustn't believe a thing we say about species cause we often forget the names and just make them up as we go along. But I'll do my best not to fool you on this one but it's been a real education in how you can, if you say it a Latin name loudly enough, people seem to believe you. Here we have one of the pathways winding off, out of focus. And you can see the remains of, this is the fence line on the south part of the garden here. Because it slopes very gently north south, the southern part of the garden is a bit wetter and there you'll see the skunk cabbages. That outcrop of rock there is the only outcrop of rock on the whole 5 acre clearing. There's several shots here that show some of the outbuildings. One of the things that gives the garden such character are the ghostly remains of former industry. Often you don't, even Peter can't tell you. Perhaps even the children wouldn't be able to remember what these buildings were used for. But they stand, they're sort of mute witnesses to what went on in the past. Now this was a goat shed. She kept many goats and she would bring them in at night. This was the rabbit hutch we think, and probably a storage shed. 15 years ago this was a perfectly usable building. And this is the house as is was maybe 3 years ago. It's now much more of a lean. I've been up in that attic by the way. Very scary. There's a lot of pelts up there still. Sort of smelly, moldy, dark things and you're flashing your flashlight around quite uncertain about what they are. This is the front door leading into the, what was the epicenter of the business world. Initially when I was visiting, I never dared go in the house. I would just circle around it, looking at all these strange relics. But Peter of course was familiar with the inside of the house and he has taken these pictures from several years ago. This shows the stacks of material that was once part of the post office. And the preserves everywhere. Still probably in that house there're dozens of jars of preserves. Deer, cougar, bear, salmon, chicken, everything was preserved. And of course all the fruits. And there's the Boat Basin Post Mistress. Now the story of the post office is one of my favorite parts of this history. And it was one I was able to do quite a bit of half-decent research in, cause mercifully the National Archives produced some real documents for me. This is the petition that Cougar Annie circulated in order to get the post office. Now she got the post office in 1935 and bear in mind that it was during these early decades of the 20th century. It was the '20s and the

'30s was when the population of that area was beginning to leech away, beginning to go to other settlements and other communities. Nonetheless she managed to convince a number of people to sign the petition. These are some of them from the mission, some of them from Hesquiaht Village, some of them from the lighthouse. And a lot you see of Rae-Arthurs signed this petition and several of them seem to have suspiciously similar handwriting. But this obviously wasn't noticed by Ottawa because they granted the post office and it turned out to be one of the most interesting scams in Canadian postal history really, because the post office stayed open until the early 1980s with less and less and less business. But because everybody loved, who knew Cougar Annie in her later years wanted to keep the old girl going and support her and loved her or admired her, they all gave business to the post office to the point she was selling stamps by mail order to people in Penticton and Vancouver. And Peter Buckland knew her very well during these later years and he arranged that Buckerfields in Parksville and a couple other rather good-natured stores accepted payment of their bills in postage stamps. And so you see if the turnover at the post office, the sale of stamps could be kept up, it looked good, so they had to keep it up. Every archeologist or hiker, whoever set foot in the harbour was required to buy stamps. Peter was taking stamps back and selling them to his friends in Vancouver. It was very, very funny stories and a lot of highly creative bookkeeping went into keeping this post office alive. And of course there was a good reason for this cause there was a stipend attached to being the post master and it was well worth her while. I think initially she wanted the post office as her, as an adjunct to her main passion which was the garden and the nursery garden business that she was running from this remote location. She actually grew plants commercially, shipped them out on The Maquinna and sold them across Canada because she advertised in prairie newspapers. But, so initially she wanted the post office to make that simpler for her, but latterly the nursery business was less important and the post office stipend was more important. In the early 1970s Ottawa did have a moment where the truth glimmered through to them and they realized that this post mistress was over 80, so they said that perhaps it is time for her to retire. Well she asked them if her son Tommy could take over this onerous position, and they agreed. So Tommy was the next post master and there we have the Boat Basin Post Master bringing in the mail in the wheelbarrow. And the other very funny thing about this post office, well there's so many funny things but the incoming mail grew less and less and less over the decades but the thing that never changed was the amount, the number of circulars. The post office circulars from Vancouver and Ottawa came in, in vast quantities. They sent the same number of circulars to Boat Basin as they would have done to Nanaimo or Kelowna. They were, and the Rae-Arthurs never ever threw anything away and they just left it there to mildew. And so you'll find these stacks of post office material that I went through. Most of it's pretty dull but some of it's fascinating because it sort of highly excited in that colour announcements of the new air mail service across Canada in 1939, or you're being invited to a post masters' meeting in Kamloops in 1953, or the Christmas party in Vancouver. And when you read these things, they're fresh as paint however mildewed they are and you're suddenly telescoped, the time just disappears and you think "oh a new air mail service." It just sounds so exciting when you read about it in that setting. Anyway, the post office is one of my favourite bits so. And there we have the Boat Basin entrepreneur of all time, Ada Annie, as she then was Lawson. That was her last surname. She did, but I should just explain the husbands briefly. She did have 5 surnames in her lifetime. Jordan, Rae-Arthur, then she married Campbell, then she married Arnold, and then she married Lawson. Two of them were Georges. There're many, many, many colourful stories attached to Cougar Annie and her husbands. It is true that she advertised for a husband after Willie Rae-Arthur died. He drowned in 1936. He was the father of all the children. He was really the prime husband. But she knew she wanted to stay

and she knew she needed help and as her granddaughter said to me very fiercely “grandma was a very moral woman” which meant she had to marry whoever it was that came to stay. So she married one after the other after the other, of these men who her daughter Rose says were basically just hired hands. I don’t know whether that’s cruel or whether there’s some truth in it. But in any case, there she was as Mrs. George Lawson. Now 2 of the more colourful stories are what happened to the George husbands. George Campbell, she is rumoured to have killed in 1942 and George Lawson, she is rumoured to have run off at gunpoint. And I always have to be very careful to say this is rumour. I have no proof, but with west coast stories, they roll over you like fog and you very quickly lose your way in them. I think there’s probably a grain of truth in both those stories. She was not a woman to mess with lightly I don’t think. The Maquinna. Really the reason these little enterprises of hers could exist at all was because of The Princess Maquinna. Every 10 days it ran up and down the west coast. Remarkable service, went on for 40 years and enabled, it really was the lifeline. It was the tendon that drew those coastal communities together. And the stories that could be told from the deck of The Maquinna are beyond count I think. I like to think of the Rae-Arthur children who were always the ones who had to row out, and often the boat would arrive in the middle of the night and they’d have to wait onshore and then row out to her on these terribly exposed waters bobbing up and down. Now most of the places she docked there was actually a dock but not at Hesquiaht. She just had to moor in open waters. And people had to go over the side by rope ladder and goods were loaded by that side loading door. If it was too rough, the ship couldn’t come in and then people just went without their supplies for that much longer. Her daughter Rose says when The Maquinna didn’t come in, it meant they had porridge for 3 meals a day. One of the reasons that the stop in Hesquiaht was important as I said earlier was because of Estevan light. Built in 1908, famous buttress structure and also of course very famous. The reason by the way, no ship could ever get to Estevan to deliver goods. The goods were delivered at Hesquiaht Village. And then they went over a four and a half mile long boardwalk. It was wide enough to take a truck to Estevan light. And interestingly they, the cows, the wild cows loved that boardwalk, so sometimes there were wonderful face-offs between the trucks and the cows, neither of whom wanted to get off the boardwalk into the deep slough. And there would be long delays until somebody maneuvered around, so the goods were delivered. Estevan of course is also famous and I’m sure all of you know that controversy about it being shelled by a Japanese submarine in 1942. The jury appears to be still out on that story as to what really happened. Like most good historical stories, it would be a terrible shame to know what really happened because the stories about what people think happened are so much more interesting. I have heard so many versions of the shelling of Estevan and Tommy Ra-Arthur wrote an account of it, about his ship fleeing Hesquiaht with shells exploding all around them. Ada Annie, Cougar Annie’s story was probably one of the best of all though because she told Peter Buckland that a shell came in and hit the boat, the beach at Boat Basin. And by any standard this is a very good story because that would have made that particular shell 11 miles off target, but I mean why spoil a good story? And in sort of as a nod to the Japanese influence on the coast, Peter has built a small corner of his garden, very small, about the size of that corner where the table is, into what he calls “the Japanese garden.” And this is one of his pet follies in the garden. You enter it by a spilt cedar door. This is a single shake that he cut down the middle. It’s 4 inches thick. The door swings open. The kanji read, I’m not good at kanji. I think they say something like “seafood is served here” or something like that. And you open the door and you find what Peter calls his “sushi bar.” The whole idea of this Japanese garden was to have somewhere to put this piece of yellow cedar. It is a single slab. 25 or 27 feet long. It’s about 5 inches thick and at this end, the wide end, it’s 51 inches wide tapering to 41 with the natural taper of the tree.

The shed above it is also tapered in the direct proportion to the slab. The Shinto gates in the distance, or Peter calls them "Shinto gates", are made of the standing cedars, the gray ghosts. And everything in this garden is a trick of perspective because in fact you cannot stand upright under the distant gate. It's very, very low. But it gives it an idea of distance. We're going around the back part of the garden now. These are some very old azaleas that are a bit leggy. And a wheelbarrow built by a man, we believe it was built by Robert Culver, who was one of Cougar Annie's most devoted admirers. He lived with her up there for a few years in the 1970s when they were both in their 80s. And this is after the disappearance of George Lawson. It's a marvelous story because they had first met in the 1950s when he had tried to come up in answer to one of her advertisements. Tried to make it work and it failed because he had children he felt responsible for and he went away. A very gentle man and a very loving person. His letters are remarkable. He addresses her as "my gentle darling." Which I think says much more about him than her. Here we're standing in a row of rhododendrons that stretch behind this point for about 25 feet, coming out into a blaze of colour at the back of the garden. Nothing is ever, no tilled soil in these beds. There's a mossy kind of, a series of mossy hummocks all through the garden and these irises and daylilies just come charging right through. They are deadheaded and raked in the autumn. Beyond that, nothing is ever done to them. And this is the patch of rhodos that is near what Peter rather tastelessly calls "dead end row" because the gravesite is near here. At least we are assuming that everybody's buried in that one place. There's a number of people here. Willie Rae-Arthur's buried in the garden. George Campbell. The 3 little babies who died in infancy. The son Laurie who drowned in the harbour as a teenager is buried here. Possibly Helen Wheeler. And I think that's it. I had no idea about this til I did a search on the births, marriages and deaths. I'm sorry, wrong way. And the series of shots of the rhododendrons. Now they're one of the glories of the garden. Many different varieties. These are treated abominably and they still seem to come through. They're never deadheaded, they're never fertilized, they're never treated well. They're usually bright yellow, their leaves, but they come back year after year. And their feet are very wet in this soil. Another of the little archways in the garden. Very typical of how you go from one little enclosure to the other, one little room to the other in the garden. It's very, very easy to get lost as you bob and weave your way through these pathways. Peter has put in a number of consciously blind alleys as well, so sometimes you have to double back. At the back of the garden there is this very tall liriodendron tree. She would have brought that in at some point, who knows when. And this is one, this is a typical Boat Basin garden scene because there's a gate. Now there's no fence of either side of it. You don't know what it was for, where it lead to, why it was there. It's just there. You know and your imagination runs riot trying to reimagine or reinvent the realities of that particular gate. That said a lot to me that shot. I'm going to change my reels now. I do have a few more. Am I OK for time Terry? Yeah. I can do it, I don't need the light, if you. OK.

[Recording breaks]

MH: And the hunting. The one target was cougar. There were several reasons for this. Very valid reasons actually. One is the cougars were preying on the livestock. They smelled the goats and the chickens and they wanted in. The daughters tell me memorable stories of one night when there was 13 goats killed when a cougar got into the goat house. It was quite a serious matter to protect the livestock. Also to protect the children, cause children are of course just snack-size. Oh sorry, the second reason was of course hunting the cougar was the bounty, which I'll get into. The bounty was huge and she was a registered bounty hunter. In the 1920s, the bounty had soared to \$40 for cougar, which was really a lot of money in the 1920s so it was well worth her while. And whatever one thinks of, you can argue the

pros and cons with the perfection of hindsight, but to her it was utterly essential and natural form of hunting. She became known as "the cougar lady." Her fame was certainly established by the 1950s. She had killed, in her lifetime she probably killed over 70 cougars. A very, very unreliable statistic, I'll tell you that right away, because she kept misreporting it herself. Every time she was telling somebody about the cougar tally, it kept going up and this was even when she was almost stone blind. So and her sons say that maybe she included a few of their cougars in her tally as well, but who's to know? This photograph actually appeared in The Vancouver Sun. It was the first bit of publicity I saw about her on the broad stage so to speak. An article done by the young staff reporter, Alex McGillfrey, in 1957. He and the photographer, Bill Bennett went out. They flew out to Boat Basin to meet Cougar Annie. He told me about it and he said even then the garden was very overgrown. And he remembered it quite well when I spoke to him about it. And there she is posing for the camera. Note how big her hands are. That's something that almost everybody commented on. Very, very large hands for such a small woman. One of the arsenals of traps in an outbuilding. There's a lot of traps around this place. She trapped everything. And of course she sold the pelts to The Hudson's Bay Company and they would have been shipped out on The Maquinna. Again, back to garden stories here. The things that have thrived in the garden. Of course like every other settler on this coast, she brought broom in with her. I think she probably lived to regret it. I know Peter Buckland lived to regret it because it was one of the main things he had to chainsaw his way through. Great towering plantations of broom. Another thing that has done amazingly well in the garden was the cotoneaster. It bursts through the roofs and doors of every outbuilding. It's all over the beach. I have seen in that garden, I've seen cotoneaster that's nearly 20 feet high. I mean this is supposed to be a small shrub if you remember. The stories of the survivors that are perhaps the most moving are the ones that have survived, or not survived but have reappeared, the ones that Peter, when he began his clearing did not know were there. When this was just a mess of salmonberry and slough here, he cleared it and the hostas came back. We don't know when they were planted. We don't know how long they'd lain dormant, but they have come back. Not only that but they're actually spreading wildly throughout the garden. Don't know how they spread. Seeds I guess. Primroses. Again there were none the first spring I was up there. I remember looking for them. Peter cleared away a patch of sword fern and blackberries. When I say a "patch" I mean an area sort of half the size of this room. And a few primroses came back and then the next year there were more and more. Wood anemone same thing. Very few when I first went there but now that there's so much more light and air in the garden, many of the mossy hummocks in the more open part of the garden are just covered with wood anemone in the spring. The daffodils are amongst the most amazing survivors. They have lain dormant, those daffodils for we don't know how long. Certainly decades. When Peter cleared this patch, it was just like that firsty mess at the back. It was sort of typically this rhodo would have just been almost invisible behind that kind of growth and all this would have been covered with a lot more messy growth. He cleared it and the daffodils came back. And they're big super things. They've got stems on them this long as and they're fleshy and there's about 6 or 7 varieties right there. And I know that if he were to clear more like that bit at the back, there would be more daffodils there because when you go in, if you crawl through there you'll find rather long leaves coming up every spring. They don't flower when they're all huddled in like that. But if they were given light and air they will come back. And that's something we're beginning to have faith in, in this garden, is the sort of power of this garden to resurrect itself. Because if you leave it alone, and give it light and air, it just comes back to life in the most bizarre fashion. And this is not something that I suffer from in my garden. I don't know about the rest of you but nothing ever comes back to life in my garden unless I work on it. The lily of the

valley. That has naturalized in some areas of the garden. Great sways of it and in some areas it mingles with the native false lily of the valley. Unlike the daffodils though, instead of becoming bigger and fleshier it's become very small and tough and tight in its structure. It's actually quite hard to pick. This is what Peter called "the plant of the year surprise" a few of years ago. I believe it's called hoop petticoats, that little yellow flower. It was just every year something comes up that he doesn't recognize and it's the plant of the year surprise. This is the open eastern end of the garden and there's a couple of points of interest here. I didn't mention that one of the things the Rae-Arthurs did in the early years was they had to ditch the garden. The one thing they had to do was to drain the soil because of course it was very wet there. Because it's sandy loam and because it overlies a clay layer, what they had to do was to ditch down, about a foot, to the clay and then line the clay with these little cedar boards. And because it wicks away north south, the water simply runs gently away. And it's almost like creating a series of giant raised beds in the garden. And what you can see here is the lines of some of the ditches and everywhere in the garden you go, you're stepping over these tiny little bridges. And they're every 20 feet or so. This would have been the production area, where there were the open straight beds that Cougar Annie had for her dahlias and her daylilies. They were her main cash crop latterly. And those dahlias are, these are dahlias that came home. Margaret Wilkinson, her daughter had received dahlias from her mother. And she's kept them going year after year. The dahlias in Cougar Annie's garden had all died because they have to be cared for. They've been left in the ground and they've rotted. But Margaret provided us with some dahlias last year and a few of the members of what Gordon described to you, Cougar Annie's Garden Club, a couple of the earliest members ceremonially planted the dahlias last year. And these are apparently at least some of the original stock from Boat Basin that has returned home. This is bits of the orchard that remain. And you can see how the garden stands out really when you have that dark conifer background. It always makes it look much more dramatic than it might otherwise look. Many varieties of iris throughout the garden. This is another cash crop. Lilies. She did sell a great many daylilies and they're probably at least a dozen varieties in the garden that remain. They go everywhere. They just spread like wildfire. And some tiger lilies. Now that was the only tiger lily in the garden when Peter took that shot. Now there's quite a patch of them in that particular zone. The vonbretion never really suffered as far as I can tell. It was always charging through. It's typical of many things in garden. A little bigger than it should be. It stands about chest-high and it's a bright red variety that I'm told is called a "lucifer." Again, a typical Boat Basin winding pathway leading you goodness knows where.